

Meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee
Friday, 23 October, 2015
safefood Dublin offices

MINUTES

PRESENT:	Prof Margaret Patterson (MP) - Chair Ms Claire Keirns (CK) Dr Bridget Maher (BM) Ms Maria Jennings (MJ) Mr Kenneth Carroll (KC)
IN ATTENDANCE:	Mr Ray Dolan, Chief Executive (RD) Dr James McIntosh, Chief Specialist in Toxicology (JMcl) Dr Linda Gordon, Chief Specialist in Food Science (LD) Ms Colette O'Shea, (COS) Ms Maureen Mulvihill, Irish Heart Foundation (MM) Mr Robert Irvine, NI Grain Trade Association (RI)
APPOLOGIES:	Dr Mary Upton Chairperson (MU) Prof Martin Caraher (MC) Dr Moira Dean (MD) Mr Robert Huey (RH) Ms Amanda McCloat (AMcC) Mr Gary McFarlane (GMcF) Prof Helen Roche (HR) Dr Christine Domegan (CD) Dr Aileen McGloin (AMG) Ms Patricia Fitzgerald (PF) Dr Marian Faughnan (MF) Dr Cliodhna Foley Nolan (CFN) Dr Gary Kearney (GK) Mr Dermot Moriarty (DM)

1. Welcome and apologies

The chairperson welcomed all members to the meeting of the **safefood** Advisory Committee (SAC). The apologies were noted.

Although a quorum of 6 members was not achieved, at the discretion of the Chair the meeting proceeded.

Permission was asked of the members to the use of Dictaphone recording; permission was granted.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes from the last meeting held on Friday, 24th April, 2015 were reviewed and there were no matters arising. The minutes were proposed by JMcl and seconded by LG.

3. Speaker presentation

Food provision in post-primary schools: Feasibility of a National Healthy Catering award

Presented by: Maureen Mulvihill, Irish Heart Foundation

Noted: Copies of the Report were distributed to all those present.

Noted: The presentation focused on food provision in post primary schools.

Noted: There are no legal provisions to provide or fund kitchens in schools. Northern Ireland has strong legislation and well developed processes in this regard.

Noted: Students in ROI are permitted to leave school premises to buy convenience food which in many cases is more accessible. Schools should be able to require students to stay in school and this should be underpinned by legislation. The members felt that putting pressure on politician's and parents was needed to move forward.

Noted: KC welcomed the initiative and suggested that joined-up thinking between government and the department of Education was necessary.

Noted: DEIS schools manipulating the budget to provide better service and better provisions for their children.

Noted: BM noted that new work/school developments should have a kitchen for employees/students factored into the plans.

Noted: It may be helpful to get buy-in from teachers, particularly Transition Year teachers, and have champions in each school. This may necessitate influencing courses for Transition Year teachers or PE teachers.

Noted: The Irish Heart Foundation is working closely with the HSE. The involvement of other Health Promotion agencies at an early stage in schooling would be beneficial.

Noted: The Chair thanked Maureen for her presentation.

4. Speaker presentation

Food Fortress: Protecting the Food Chain

Presented by: Robin Irvine, CEO, Northern Ireland Grain Trade Association

Noted: Robin described how the Food Fortress concept has been applied to animal feed and the advantages for the animal feed importers/producers. The Food Fortress is now run by the animal feed sector for the benefit of its members. A discussion took place around the potential for extending the concept into other agri-food sectors as well such as dairy and red meat.

Noted: The Agri-Food Strategy for NI is helpful in this regard as some of the recommendations are being rolled out across other sectors as well, in particular the poultry sector.

Noted: The Food Fortress concept is fully supported by the regulators who can also use the information for their own risk assessment purposes.

Noted: Food businesses are now starting to see economic dividends as a result of participating in this scheme.

Noted: The Chair thanked Robert for his presentation.

5. safefood research tender update

Noted: JMI advised that evaluations have been completed on eight projects that were now in the contractual stage.

Noted: Research Project – *Study of current food-pathogen attribution trend and the proportion of foodborne illness acquired in the home*: Members were asked for suggestions as to potential candidates who would be interested in this project. However, it was suggested that the scope was too broad and needed to be more focussed.

Noted: LG informed the group of an event on 1st December at the Gibson Hotel, Dublin that would focus on Foodborne Viruses.

6. Folic acid update

Noted: JMI informed the members that a full evaluation of the Folic Acid Campaign and will be available in the short term.

Noted: Concerning the campaign, reach and engagement were high, evidence was given of a positive impact on attitudes and behaviours, and the campaign had been primarily a digital.

Noted: It was suggested to follow up on this campaign to see to what extent behaviours had changed.

Noted: It was suggested that **safefood** should consider reissuing previous campaigns. Although there would be a cost implication, the use of social media could overcome this obstacle.

7. Discussion session on future SAC

Ray Dolan CEO, **safefood** thanked the six members of the SAC that are coming to the end of their term in November after serving their term. Their dedication and hard work were acknowledged, especially that of Dr Mary Upton who served as Chair of the SAC and link to the **safefood** Advisory Board. He also thanked all the SAC member for their commitment. The recruitment process for new members commenced in September 2015.

8. Thought starter document to assist in the prioritisation of future SAC Work

Noted: It was suggested that, at a subsequent meeting, more time should be allowed to consider the accompanying document.

Noted: It was noted that metrics should be factored into the design of a project and this should include KPIs and baseline data if possible. Retrospective measurements are extremely difficult to carry out.

9. AOB & date for next meeting

The next meeting will take place in the spring of 2016. The exact date to be decided and the members advised accordingly.

James McIntosh
November 2015